



**At Home Worship
Season After Epiphany
10 January - 14 February 2021
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**

An epiphany is when we come to see or understand something, perhaps in a new way. It is a revelation of sorts. In the season of after Epiphany in the church year, we see Jesus' revelation of himself first to the magi, then to the community gathered at his baptism, throughout his miracles, and finally at his Transfiguration in front of the disciples. This is a getting to know Jesus sort of season.

Our At Home Worship for this season will follow the lectionary and reflections are offered for each week. You'll need your bible for the service. You can also light a candle or set something else out to remind yourself that you are worshipping the Lord. If you're able, you're invited to read through the service with a friend or relative on the phone. Either way, be assured of God's presence.

You'll note that this packet will serve you through mid-February. Ash Wednesday is on February 17, so we'll have At Home Worship for Lent to you by then.

If you would like to share an offering with the church, the information on how to do so is below.

*In Christ,
Pastor Colleen Montgomery
Holy Trinity, Wytheville*

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

*Mail offering to: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 405 W Main Street, Wytheville, VA 24382
Online giving option: <http://www.holytrinitywytheville.org/> Link at the bottom of the page*

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Season After Epiphany Worship 2021

Take three centering breaths as you prepare your heart, mind, and body for worship.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,
whose goodness cascades over all creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,

you search us and know us. You are acquainted with all our ways. We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin— our own sins and the broken systems that bind us. We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love. We distrust those who are not like us. We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider generations to come. Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone. Even before the words are on our tongues, you know them; receive them in your divine mercy. Amen.

How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of ☩ Christ Jesus,
our sins are washed away
and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness,
we are called to be the beloved community
living out Christ's justice
and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

Amen.

Sunday, January 10, 2021 - Baptism of Our Lord

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings

Genesis 1:1-5 *God creates light God creates light*

Psalm 29

Acts 19:1-7 *Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I | am well pleased." Alleluia. (*Matt. 3:17*)

Mark 1:4-11 *Revelation of Christ as God's servant*

Reflection by Pastor Colleen - Holy Trinity, Wytheville

In the gospel of Mark, there are no angels. There is no manger. The magi do not come. In the gospel of Mark, there is John the Baptist calling from the wilderness and Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan. This is how the story begins. Jesus as a full, grown man beginning in his ministry and mission of proclaiming that the kingdom of God has come near.

The abruptness of the beginning of the gospel parallels the abruptness of the creation story. There was the formless and void, then God spoke, and then there was light. There was a blank page, then Isaiah's prophecy, and then there was John and Jesus. We don't get a lot of details or back story as to how either John or Jesus came to be in the wilderness.

But by the end of the story we know one important detail that will shape the rest of the story of Mark and the stories of our lives as well. In Mark 1:11, God's voice comes from above and identifies Jesus as God's own Son. Jesus is the Son of God, whom God loves, and who will save the world.

Jesus being the Son of God changes our lives because it is through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension through which we are saved. We come to know God and God's will for our lives through Jesus. And the same experience that Jesus had on the River Jordan, we also had at our baptism. Though perhaps the voice did not boom down from above, God said to each of us in our baptisms: You are my child. With you I am well pleased. We give thanks this day for Jesus and for God's great love for us. The detail that change our lives forever. Amen.

Sunday, January 17, 2021 - Second Sunday After Epiphany

Prayer of the Day

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings

1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20] *The calling of Samuel*

Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 *Glorify God in your body*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. We have found the Messiah: Jesus Christ, who brings us grace and truth. Alleluia. (John 1:41, 17)

John 1:43-51 *The calling of the first disciples*

Reflection by Pastor Colleen- Holy Trinity, Wytheville

The theme of today's scripture readings is that God calls all sorts of people to be disciples! Sometimes the message is clear and other times it might take a little bit longer to understand. But regardless, God calls each of us by name to serve in the kingdom of God according to our skills and talents.

In our first reading, we hear God calling to young Samuel. At first, he thinks it is his caretaker Eli calling out to him. But together they were able to figure out that it was actually God calling to Samuel! Samuel answers the call and ends up being one of the most important priests and prophets in all of Israel. God began with Samuel when he was just a kid, meaning that we are never too young to serve God. And we can't forget that Eli helped Samuel discern God's call, meaning we are never too old to serve God either.

From John, we read about Jesus calling his first disciples to follow him. Philip is the first disciple that Jesus calls, and he follows straight away. Philip goes to invite his friend Nathaniel to follow as well. Nathaniel is more skeptical; he has some questions. However, by the end of the reading we discover that Nathaniel does come to see Jesus as the Son of Man and he follows.

No matter where you are, how old you are, or what your skills are God loves you and calls you to be a disciple of Jesus. Each in our own way, we worship and serve God with our hearts, bodies, and minds. Amen.

Sunday, January 24, 2021 - The Third Sunday After Epiphany

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 *Repentance at Nineveh*

Psalm 62:5-12

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 *Living in the end times*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news. Alleluia. (Mark 1:15)

Mark 1:14-20 *The calling of the disciples at the sea*

Reflection by Pastor Sarah – Redeemer, Bristol

Have you ever been caught off guard or been completely unprepared? If so, then you can relate to the early disciples, Simon, Andrew, James, and John, in our Gospel reading today.

These sets of brothers are found on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, on a day like any other. They are likely tired from a day's work of fishing and still working their nets. Yet, in the midst of this every day, ordinary moment, these fishermen are caught off guard by a complete stranger whose name is Jesus.

And with his ordinary, simple-phrased call to "*Follow me*" (Mark 1:17), the brothers instantly follow Jesus. They leave their fishing boats, their unmended fishing nets, the sea, their father, and to go to follow Jesus. This moment of unpreparedness met by an immediate following is the definition of an epiphany moment that encompasses this season of our Church year.

And like these first four followers, we too can be caught off guard and completely unprepared at the immediacy of Jesus' call in our own lives. This Gospel reading reminds us that even, and maybe especially, it is in the ordinary moments of our own everyday lives where Jesus shows up, inviting and calling us to embrace our own epiphany moments.

So, what might it look like to drop the everyday things that we might be doing, step out of our comfort zones, and leave something we no longer need behind? All to follow Jesus! Amen.

Sunday, January 31, 2021- The Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Prayer of the Day

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 *The prophet speaks with God's authority*

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 *Limits to liberty: the case of food offered to idols*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light; for those who sat in the shadow of death light has dawned. Alleluia. (Matt. 4:16)

Mark 1:21-28 *The healing of one with an unclean spirit*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen - Holy Trinity, Wytheville

The psalms are both beloved by many and not often preached about by pastors. Over the past decades, Lutherans read a psalm most weeks in their worship. The words comfort us, inspire us, and at times give us words to pray when we can't find words ourselves. But they are not often the focus of any sermon.

Psalms is a collection of one hundred-fifty prayers, songs, liturgies, and poems. While some psalms are attributed to King David, they were likely not written by him. There are a host of unknown authors who contributed to this book. Luther says, "[Psalms] might well be called a little Bible. In it is comprehended most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible. It is really a fine ... handbook. In fact, I have a notion that the Holy Spirit wanted to take the trouble himself to compile a short Bible and book of examples of all Christendom or all saints, so that anyone who could not read the whole Bible would here have anyway almost an entire summary of it, comprised in one little book." (LW35:254)

Today's psalm is a hymn of praise and takes the form of an acrostic poem in Hebrew. Meaning that each line begins with consecutive letters of the alphabet. The verses praise God for all the works of the Lord such as creation, forgiveness of sins, provision of food, and redemption of the people. Which of the verses speaks most to you today? What praises would you add to this psalm? Be assured that as you pray and read the verses of the psalm that your voice is joined with the countless voices who have prayed it before. God hears you. God loves you. Always. Amen.

Sunday, February 7, 2021 - The Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 40:21-31 *The creator of all cares for the powerless*

Psalms 147:1-11, 20c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23 *A servant for the sake of the gospel*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. The servant of God took our infirmities and bore our diseases. Alleluia. (Matt. 8:17)

Mark 1:29-39 *The healing of Peter's mother-in-law*

Reflection by Pastor Sarah (Redeemer, Bristol)

It is easy to get a little caught up in the miraculous healings of this text. Don't get me wrong, Jesus' healing of Simon's mother-in-law and the many others who were cured of sickness and demons should not be overlooked. For even our Gospel Acclamation for today proclaims the wonder of God taking on all our infirmities and bearing all our diseases (Matt. 8:17)! Alleluia, indeed!

But the very middle of this text should not be glossed over or forgotten either. For up to this point in the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus has been pretty busy! He has traversed from John and his baptism at the Jordan River, to the wilderness for forty days, to Galilee to begin ministry, to cleaning spirits and healing the sick. And amidst all his work, it's about time for Jesus to take a break.

"In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35). This part of today's Gospel passage serves as an important reminder, that the work of God is embodied in our everyday vocations and daily work as well as in our rest and our prayer. For just as Jesus needed time to rest and to pray, we do too! Yet, finding the time and the space to do that is not always an easy task. But the work of Jesus, getting up very early in the morning to find a deserted place to simply pray, allows us, amid our own every day, busy lives, to take that needed break, to find that quiet place, and to do the work of praying!

For our work will always be there, the to-do list will likely remain full, and those who need your help will often still come to find you. So, Jesus instead invites us to look for those places of quiet and rest in our own lives and fill them with rest and prayer. I pray that this passage gives you permission to take a breath, take in a quiet space, and lift up what is on your heart to God in prayer. Amen.

Sunday, February 14, 2021 - The Transfiguration

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, the resplendent light of your truth shines from the mountaintop into our hearts. Transfigure us by your beloved Son, and illumine the world with your image, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings

2 Kings 2:1-12 *Elijah taken up to heaven and succeeded by Elisha*

Psalms 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 *God's light seen clearly in the face of Christ*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him! Alleluia. (Luke 9:35)

Mark 9:2-9 *Revelation of Christ as God's beloved Son*

Reflection by Pastor Colleen - Holy Trinity, Wytheville

We began the season after Epiphany with Jesus' baptism and the voice of God coming down from the heavens. We end the season after Epiphany with a parallel experience for Jesus, the Transfiguration. These two events are like bookends in both the gospel of Mark and also our liturgical experience. From this moment on in both Mark and our liturgical year, the story takes us to the cross as we begin Lent on Wednesday. But for now, back to the mountaintop.

Jesus has taken just three of his disciples with him, Peter, James, and John. They witness Jesus transfigure from normal everyday Jesus to dazzling bright light Jesus! This is an affirmation of Jesus' divinity with several layers. The light is a miraculous sign, something supernatural, that shows Jesus is not just human. The appearance of Moses and Elijah represent the two major themes of the Old Testament. Moses represents the law and Elijah represents the prophets. Their appearance alongside Jesus indicates that Jesus is the fulfillment of both. Then we hear God's voice again. Just like at his baptism, God's voice says to Jesus and the gathered disciples, "This is my Son, the beloved. Listen to him."

Unsurprisingly, the disciples want to stay on the mountaintop and bask in the glow and glory of Jesus and Moses and Elijah. However, Jesus is clear in his actions and words. They are not meant to stay there. He leads them back down the mountain with instructions to keep this experience a secret. Jesus returns back to his normal life of preaching, teaching, and healing with a shift towards the cross. It is on the cross that we realize that the baptism and transfiguration are not a set of two bookends, rather a set of three cosmic events that show forth the glory of God. But for now, remember that you are beloved of God and that Jesus goes with you in your normal everyday life. Amen.

APOSTLES CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

We pray together, knowing that the Spirit knits our prayers together. You may complete each phrase with who or what you wish to pray for.

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

For the church universal, its ministry, and the mission of the gospel....

For the well-being of creation...

For peace and justice in the world, the nations and those in authority, the community...

For the poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved, lonely, and those listed below....

For all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, and especially those who suffer from COVID-19 and those listed below...

For our congregation, all members and friends of the congregation and their families...

(Additional prayers may be added.)

With thanksgiving for the faithful departed, especially those listed below....

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Blessing

God the creator strengthen you;
Jesus the beloved fill you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter ☩ keep you in peace.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.
Thanks be to God.